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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/730,633	12/08/2003	Philip E. Eggers	NET 2-100	4273
266	7590	10/25/2006	EXAMINER	
MUELLER AND SMITH, LPA MUELLER-SMITH BUILDING 7700 RIVERS EDGE DRIVE COLUMBUS, OH 43235			HOEKSTRA, JEFFREY GERBEN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3736	

DATE MAILED: 10/25/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.		Applicant(s)	
	10/730,633		EGGERS ET AL.	
	Examiner		Art Unit	
	Jeffrey G. Hoekstra		3736	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 August 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 13-29 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Notice of Amendment

1. In response to the amendment filed on 08/14/2006, amendment(s) to the specification is/are acknowledged. The current rejections of claims 1-12 are withdrawn.

The following new and reiterated grounds of rejection are set forth:

2. The examiner notes the amendment filed on 08/14/2006 appears to be a Non-Compliant Amendment pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(c) for failing to properly identify the status of the claims (e.g. claims 13-29 are withdrawn).

Election/Restrictions

3. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

4. This application contains claims 13-29 drawn to an invention nonelected with traverse in Paper No. 20060619. A complete reply to the final rejection must include cancellation of nonelected claims or other appropriate action (37 CFR 1.144) See MPEP § 821.01.

Double Patenting

5. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

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6. Claims 1, 3-4, and 12 are rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 5, 8, 15-17, 20, 22, and 23 of U.S. Patent No. 6,471,659 B1. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the patented claims positively recite the as claimed structural limitations of the instant case although the elements are referenced with a different name, for example the support member of the instant case is claimed as a delivery cannula.

7. Claim 1 is rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Patent No. 6,923,809 B2. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the instant case is merely a broader recitation of the patented claims.

8. Claim 1 is provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of copending Application No. 10/630,336. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the copending claims positively recite the as claimed structural limitations of the instant case although the elements are referenced with a different name, for example the support member of the instant case is claimed as a delivery member.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

9. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

10. Claims 1-5, 8, 11, and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Burbank et al (US 2002/0072688 A1).

11. For claims 1-3, 7, 8, 11, and 12, Burbank et al discloses an electrosurgical cutting apparatus 10 (paragraphs 9-11 and 61) as broadly as structurally claimed, comprising:

- a support member 30 having an internal channel and extending to a forward region;
- a tissue capture component 72 positioned within said interior channel, comprising:
 - a plurality of elongate thin leafs 20,20b (paragraph 34) extending forwardly from a base portion to a leaf tip region 12, a said leaf having a resilient metal drive component 18, 18b extending along a leaf axis from said base portion to a tip region and having a first width at said base portion extending at least to a guide commencement location and configured to define a protective aperture 14 extending across said guide outlet at said tip region,

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- an electrically-insulative, polymeric, flexible leaf cable guide 23 component comprising a sheath (paragraph 33) and having one or more guide channels, the lumen of element 23, reinforced in the vicinity of said guide outlet, disposed parallel with said leaf axis, extending to a guide outlet, the proximal opening of lumen of element 23, configured to surround one or more cables of a pursing cable assembly between said guide outlet and said guide commencement location,
- an integrally formed coupling portion 35 mounted with said drive component,
- said guide channel extending from said tip region along said drive component to said guide commencement location as best seen in Figures 1-7,
- said leaf assembly being moveable to deploy outwardly from said support member forward region (paragraphs 9-11) , and
- said capture component having a pursing cable 16 assembly extending through said cable guide component guide channel and said guide outlet, electrosurgically energizable and deployable with each said leaf tip region (paragraph 61);
- a drive assembly 24 engageable with said leaf assembly base portion and said pursing cable assembly and actuable to move said leaf assembly to deploy outwardly from said support member while effecting said deployment of said pursing cable assembly (paragraphs 35-37); and

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- a control assembly (paragraphs 32, 43) drivably engageable with said drive assembly to effect said actuation thereof and having a terminal electrically coupled with said cable assembly to effect the electrosurgical energization thereof.

12. For claim 4, Burbank et al discloses an electrosurgical cutting apparatus 10, comprising: said leaf drive component 18b wherein a first width is defined between oppositely disposed edges extending from said base portion to said guide commencement location, and is configured having a second full width less than said first width extending from said guide commencement location to said tip region and defining with said first width oppositely disposed shoulders at said guide commencement location, as best seen in Figures 11-13; and said leaf cable guide coupling portion is configured having oppositely disposed rearward end surfaces at said guide commencement location extending in abutable support before said oppositely disposed shoulders as best seen in Figures 4-7.

13. For claim 5 Burbank et al discloses an electrosurgical cutting apparatus 10 wherein said leaf drive component 18 is configured having at least one serrated edge, the gears as best seen in Figures 4-7, with rearwardly directed points configured to engage said leaf cable guide component coupling portion 35 when said leafs are moved rearwardly from a deployed orientation toward said support member (paragraphs 9-11, 33, 61).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

15. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

16. Claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burbank et al. Burbank et al discloses the claimed invention but does not disclose expressly the dimensions and material compositions of the leaf cable drive and guide components. It would have been an obvious matter of design choice to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the electrosurgical cutting apparatus 10 (paragraphs 9-11 and 61) as taught by Burbank et al with the claimed dimensions and polymer, because Applicant has not disclosed that the dimensions and particular polymer provides an advantage, is used for a particular purpose, or solve a stated problem. One of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant's invention to

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perform equally well with dimensions and materials of the electrosurgical cutting apparatus 10 (paragraphs 9-11 and 61) as taught by Burbank et al, because it provides a means to electrosurgically dissect, encapsulate, and remove tissue and since it appears to be an arbitrary design consideration which fails to patentably distinguish over Burbank et al.

Therefore, it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to modify Burbank et al to obtain the invention as specified in the claim(s).

Response to Arguments

17. The current rejection of claim 1 on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 18,26,30 and 25 of U.S. Patent No. 6,287,304 B1 is withdrawn as Applicant's arguments are found to be persuasive.

18. Applicant's arguments filed 08/14/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues Burbank et al (a) does not disclose the as-claimed "pursing cable assembly", (b) does not disclose the as-claimed "electrically insulative flexible cable guide component", and (c) does not disclose the claimed materials and dimensions of the as-claimed "leaf drive components having a cable guide coupling portion and channel guide". The examiner disagrees and maintains the previous rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) and 103(a) for claims 1-12.

19. Regarding (a), the Examiner disagrees. Burbank et al suggests and teaches the as-claimed "pursing cable assembly" as broadly as structurally claimed. Burbank discloses distally disposing an electrosurgical cutting arc, or pursuing cable assembly 16,

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for deployment into the body along with each said leaf tip region, wherein said bodily deployment defines a cutting arc, the physical response of the body, initially expanding via insertion and subsequent contraction via extraction (paragraphs 9 and 32). The examiner notes the definition of pursing in this context to be "to contract into folds". Burbank et al shows a folded electrosurgical cutting wire as best seen in Figure 1.

20. In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., "element 16 is not employed in Burbank's tissue isolation") are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

21. Regarding (b), the Examiner disagrees. Burbank et al suggests and teaches the as-claimed "electrically insulative flexible cable guide component" as broadly as structurally claimed. Burbank discloses an electrically-insulative, polymeric, flexible leaf cable guide 23 component comprising a sheath (paragraph 33) and having one or more guide channels, the lumen of element 23, reinforced in the vicinity of said guide outlet, disposed parallel with said *leaf axis*, extending to a guide outlet, the proximal opening of lumen of element 23, configured to surround one or more cables of a pursing cable assembly between said guide outlet and said guide commencement location.

22. In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., "a cable guide component surmounts each leaf as shown in Fig. 9, with cables of

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the pursing cable assembly extending through the appropriate guide channels”) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

23. Regarding (c), the Examiner disagrees. Burbank et al suggests and teaches the as-claimed “leaf drive components having a cable guide coupling portion and channel guide” as broadly as structurally claimed because one of ordinary skill in the art, furthermore, would have expected Applicant’s invention to perform equally well with dimensions and materials of the electrosurgical cutting apparatus 10 (paragraphs 9-11 and 61) as taught by Burbank et al, because it provides a means to electrosurgically dissect, encapsulate, and remove tissue that fails to patentably distinguish over Burbank et al.

Conclusion

24. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey G. Hoekstra whose telephone number is (571)272-7232. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Max F. Hindenburg can be reached on (571)272-4726. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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